

# My Home Matters!

## Lesson Plan



Accompanies "My House Matters!" Worksheet

Recommended Grade Level: Second or Third

*This lesson plan can be adapted to fit your curriculum and the needs of your students. The study of the students' houses may not be appropriate for your class, but we hope this lesson plan and homework will inspire you to be creative about teaching the importance of history and preservation. For example, students could study important houses or local buildings instead of their own homes.*

### Overarching objective of Preservation Study:

The objective of this lesson is to broaden the students' understanding of the importance of preserving our shared heritage. Students will identify items and places that matter to them and determine why it is important to learn about and preserve them.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a national organization that provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to help people save the places that matter to them.

### Classroom Objectives:

Students work in small groups to identify common characteristics of homes built during the same period.

Students will discuss why preservation of homes (both historic and modern) is important.

### Materials/Preparation:

Using the students' answers to question 2 on the homework assignment, sort students into groups based on the years their homes were built. The groups do not need to be exactly the same size. Make a chart to record answers.

Have the completed homework assignments on hand.

Each group will need a piece of chart paper and markers

### Preceding Lessons:

1. **Vocabulary:** Students have learned the definition of "preserve" and "preservation."

2. **Homework:** Students completed the “My House Matters!” homework assignment which asked them to record important information about the age, structure and components of their homes.
3. **Sharing:** Some students have brought in older items from their home. These items (or pictures of these items) have been shared a few at a time. Students work together to answer the questions, “Why does this thing matter?” and “Why should we save it?” or “Why has it been saved?” Photos of the items are displayed in the classroom under the caption: “Things that Matter to Us”
4. **What Matters?** Students make lists of what matters to them and why.
5. **Why Preserve?** Students brainstorm about why it is important to save items and places.

**Procedure:**

1. **Discussion:** Review the meaning of the word preservation. Review the reasons students have listed for saving important items and places. Remind students that preserving artifacts and places helps us to remember our history and will allow future generations to learn about how we live now.
2. **That’s Me! Activity:** Students participate in a stand-up/sit-down activity. Using the homework assignment questions, the teacher prompts students with statements. The students show that the statement is true or false about their own house by standing or remaining seated. (Example: Teacher, looking at question 6, says, “My house has a chimney!” Students who have a home with a chimney stand up and say, “That’s my house!” and then sit back down. Teacher then prompts, “My chimney is made from brick!” Etc...) This activity can take as few or as many minutes as necessary to help children understand that their homes have commonalities and differences all of which are important in studying their house.
3. **Small Group Exploration:**
  - a. Students, using question 2 from the homework assignment, record the date their house was built on a sticky note. Then they work together as a class to put themselves in order from oldest to newest home. Divide the class into small groups based on the age of the home. It is not necessary for groups to be exactly the same size, it is more important that the homes are from similar periods. (For example, you may have a group of two students with homes built in the 1700s, and then a group of six students with homes built between 1950 and 1970.)
  - b. Students use their homework assignments to discuss similarities among their homes. Students should record the information they find on chart paper.
  - c. Students come back to the large group and share what they have found. Record the information they share on a chart labeled, “Comparing our Homes.”

4. **Discussion:** Houses built in the same era often have similar features. Guide the children in a discussion about why certain periods have produced homes with different characteristics and why it is important to see these differences. (For example, you may find that some homes built 150 years ago have working shutters that open and close. Historically, they provided security, protection from weather, privacy, and ventilation. In contrast, many homes built today have shutters that are immovable and attached to the house for purely decorative purposes. This is a design element carried over from older homes that can give a house a more traditional look even though technology now makes it unnecessary for the shutters to function as they once did.)
  
5. **Wrap Up:** We preserve historic items and places so that we can learn about and remember our history. We should preserve modern and new items and places so that future generations can learn about and remember us.

*This lesson was written by Jody Kelley in cooperation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Ms. Kelley is a 2nd grade teacher in the Carlisle Public Schools in Carlisle, Massachusetts where she has been teaching for the past 3 years. This is Ms. Kelley's 9th year of teaching. Previous to her current position she taught first grade and multi-age in Westford, Massachusetts, Palm Springs California and Frenchtown, Montana.*